Flinders Discovery Centre

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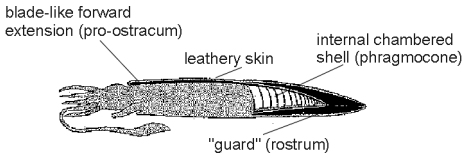
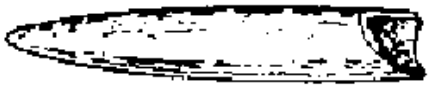
FOSSIL FOSSICKING HUGHENDEN AND DISTRICT

Belemnite locality, north of Hughenden

Approx 16 km north of Hughenden on the Kennedy Development Road, stop and try your hand at fossicking for fossils. The weathered mudstone rocks to the immediate north of Hughenden contain many fossils, which date from the period 112 million years ago, to 105 million years ago. They represent the remains of animals fossilised within two separate inland seas, which flooded this part of the Australian continent at this time. The most common fossils found at the fossicking site are belemnite guards. These weather out freely in the mudstone and can be picked up on small erosion surfaces and in the soil and range from 3cm to 9cm long.
These bullet or cigar shaped fossils are the internal skeleton from a type of squid which lived in the cool waters of the shallow inland sea. The belemnite guard is composed of solid calcium carbonate and formed the counterbalance at the back of the belemnite animal which was an active swimmer.

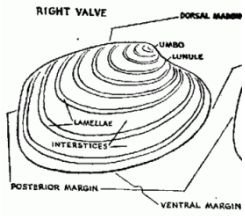
Other fossils known from the site include small bivalves and the ammonite Beudanticeras flindersi.





Roadside - Stamford

Travelling south towards Winton stop approx 5.5km from Stamford on the left hand side of the road, for some roadside fossicking. The fossicking area adjacent to the railway line south of Stamford contains the fossil remains of marine animals deposited in the shallow waters of the last inland sea as it retreated to the north some 100-98 million years ago. The fossil site is particularly rich containing the remains of large numbers of bivalves (fossil clams, pippies and oysters). In addition there are common tusk shells (scaphopods), belemnites, snails, sharks teeth and occasional bones of turtles. Many of the shells (but not all) are natural moulds where the shell has dissolved to leave a well-preserved mould of the internal or external sides of the shell. The largest bivalve is the large flat shell belonging to Inoceramus. This is a very common bivalve in the marine rocks of the Artesian Basin and characterised by their prismatic shell structure in cross section. Common amongst the bivalves are trigoniids. Characterised by strong ribbing on the shell surface and their triagular shape, they are easily recognisable. Small clams, reminiscent of modern scallops are present and are up to a few cm in size. Scaphopods are small tusk like molluscs, which are represented by small but long tubes, common in cross section.



Eromanga Sea Byway

Travel approx 55km on the Hughenden Muttaburra Road, turning off to the left at the Eromanga Sea Byway. Drive in approx 30km just past Strathroy Station homestead to the base of the first jump up, fossick for small bivalves and pieces of ammonites.